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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND
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Agenda item 8

DRAFT REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FIRST PART
OF ITS THIRTY-THIRD SESSION

Rapporteur: Mr. Wolfgang STÖCKL (Germany)

Addendum

IV. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

D. Evaluation (continued)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees

1. At its 7th meeting, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the in-depth evaluation of the programme on international protection of and assistance to refugees: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/AC.51/1993/2).

Discussion

2. In the course of the debate, delegations made observations on the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1. A number of delegations recalled that, at the request of the Secretary-General, and pursuant to many General Assembly resolutions, UNHCR had extended its activities on an ad hoc basis to cover situations involving internally displaced populations. Other delegations had misgivings concerning the overstretching of the capacity of UNHCR and the political aspects of extending its activities beyond its mandate; they stressed the necessity of conforming to the mandate and to agreements reached between UNHCR and

Governments. One delegation stressed the need for more voluntary funding if UNHCR were to undertake additional commitments.

Recommendation 3. One delegation felt that his recommendation should also propose a memorandum of understanding by the Centre for Human Rights and UNHCR to cover all aspects of their collaboration. A number of delegations stated that recommendation 3 was beyond UNHCR's mandate, and also did not have a legislative mandate from the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Commission on Human Rights.

Recommendation 4. One delegation felt that this recommendation should conclude by stating that UNHCR should withdraw only after the objectives of a programme have been achieved.

Recommendation 6. A number of delegations stated that the following should be added in line 2 of recommendation 6 after "roster of NGOs active in refugee matters": "and in consultative status with ECOSOC".

Recommendation 8. A number of delegations stated that recommendation 8 was beyond the scope of UNHCR's mandate as well as the scope of General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, which was related to natural disasters. The delegations also stressed the need to retain the apolitical nature of UNHCR's activities, as mandated by its statute. A number of delegations welcomed this recommendation and in this regard emphasized the importance of close cooperation between UNHCR and the Centre for Human Rights.

Recommendation 9. One delegation considered that the recommendation should also state that a single operational agency should be assigned responsibility for ensuring that all sectors are covered in inter-agency relief operations, and UNHCR should be this lead agency.

Recommendation 10. A number of delegations expressed the view that the funding for emergency and preparedness response should be included in the provisions made for UNHCR's general programmes and not be the subject of special appeals.

Recommendation 21. One delegation considered that insufficient attention was being given to the important area of staff media training.

Recommendation 26. One delegation considered that, given the current financial climate, the mobilization of additional voluntary contributions was crucial.

Recommendation 27. A number of delegations stated that multi-year planning should not be overambitious.

Recommendation 28. A number of delegations considered that the request for additional staff rejected by the General Assembly in the context of the 1992-1993 budget should be placed before the General Assembly again in the 1994-1995 budget.

Recommendation 31. A number of delegations considered that a balanced geographical representation should be taken into account in any strategy for recruitment of UNHCR staff.

3. One delegation noted that in the context of the system-wide activities addressing the problems of refugees, more clear-cut focus on providing assistance to the countries of asylum experiencing serious economic difficulties was required.

Conclusions and recommendations

4. The Committee commended the Secretariat for the excellent quality of the report.

5. Being in general agreement with the main thrust of the report, namely to strengthen the functions of protection and search for durable solutions and to further delegate operational responsibility for assistance, and keeping in mind the necessity of UNHCR functioning within its mandate, the Committee endorsed the report and its recommendations.

6. The Committee decided that the report and the section of the CPC report dealing with it should be transmitted to the Executive Committee of UNHCR for its consideration and action.
